Express Mailing Label No. EV 300737434 US

PATENT APPLICATION
Docket No. 48916-01010

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

of

DON JULIANO

And

FRANK BAKER

for

MOLDED CONTAINER

David O. Seeley
Registration No. 30,148
Holme Roberts & Owen, LLP
299 South Main, Suite 1800
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. The Field of the Invention

[001] The present invention relates to molded containers. More specifically, the present invention relates to thermoplastic molded containers for storing objects including cookies, pastries, and other foodstuffs.

2. The Relevant Technology

[002] Thermoplastic molded containers have been widely utilized in a variety of applications. In recent years, molded containers have become increasingly popular for the storage of food stuffs such as cookies, pastries, cakes, and the like. One reason for the increasing popularity of molded containers for the storage of food stuffs is the combination the shatterproof rigid construction, low cost of materials, and transparency of the containers. Thermoplastic containers can be manufactured to have sufficient rigidity to prevent damage of the baked goods. Additionally, thermoplastic molding provides a low cost alternative to other point of sale options. The transparent or semi-transparent nature of plastics from which the containers are molded allow a user to view the food stuffs stored therein. As a result, the molded container provides a mechanism for both displaying and protecting food stuffs to be sold to consumers.

[003] One popular design of molded containers includes an upper lid portion and a lower tray portion. Foodstuffs are enclosed between the upper lid portion and the lower tray portion. However, the configuration of the upper lid portion and a lower tray portion of many molded container includes several deficiencies. One problem related to the design of molded containers is that when a user handles the molded container there is propensity for the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion to separate and/or

move relative to one another. For example, problems can arise where handling of the molded container results in twisting or deformation of the lower tray portion and/or the upper lid portion such that the seal connecting them separates. Separation of the seal can lead to opening of the molded container and spillage of the contents thereof. Additionally, even where opening of the molded container does not occur, an air tight seal is difficult to maintain. The inability to maintain an airtight seal can lead to the spoilage of the food stuffs enclosed in the molded container.

[004] Another problem can arise where the configuration of the molded container can collapse or otherwise be compressed causing damage to objects positioned therein. For example, based on the configuration, construction, and size of the molded container the lower tray portion and/or the upper lid portion may be deformed under certain circumstances causing damage to food stuffs enclosed in the molded container.

[005] A variety of mechanisms have been employed in the attempt to overcome short comings of traditional molded containers. For example, in one configuration, an adhesive label is positioned across the seal between the lower lid tray portion and the upper lid portion. The adhesive label is configured to prevent inadvertent separation of the seal and prevent spillage of the contents therein. However, the use of an adhesive seal does not prevent the passage of air into and out of the container. Additionally, a seal can be costly and difficult to place. Finally, once the seal is broken, it may be difficult or impossible to adequately reseal the container.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[006] The present invention is directed to a molded container having an upper lid portion and a lower tray portion according to one aspect of the present invention. The upper tray portion is configured to overlay and be securely coupled to the lower tray portion so as to substantially enclose objects positioned between the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion.

[007] According to one aspect of the present invention, the molded container includes a plurality of standoffs positioned between the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion. The standoffs maintain a desired displacement between the top surface of the upper lid portion and a bottom extremity of the lower tray portion. The standoffs prevent inadvertent separation, lateral movement, and compression of the upper lid portion relative to the lower tray portion.

[008] According to another aspect of the present invention, the molded container includes a multi-angle seal adapted to facilitate the secure coupling of the upper lid portion to the lower tray portion. The multi-angle seal is formed from at least a portion of the perimeter of the upper lid portion and at least a portion of the perimeter of the lower tray portion. At least one surface of the multi-angle seal provides a resistive force to prevent separation and provide a secure sealing surface when the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion are forced together. At least one surface of the multi-angle seal provides a resistive force when the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion are forced in opposite directions. At least one surface of the multi-angle seal provides resistive force to minimize lateral movement of the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion relative to one another.

[009] These and other objects and features of the present invention will become more fully apparent from the following description and appended claims, or may be learned by the practice of the invention as set forth hereinafter.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[010] To further clarify the above and other advantages and features of the present invention, a more particular description of the invention will be rendered with reference to specific embodiments thereof which are illustrated in the appended drawings. It should be appreciated that these drawings depict only typical embodiments of the invention and are therefore not to be considered limiting of its scope. The invention will be described and explained with additional specificity and detail through the use of the accompanying drawings in which:

[011] Figure 1 is a perspective view illustrating the molded container according to one aspect of the present invention.

[012] Figure 2 is a perspective view illustrating the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion of the molded container separated from one another according to one aspect of the present invention.

[013] Figure 3A illustrates a first member and second member of a standoff according to one aspect of the present invention.

[014] Figure 3B illustrates a first member and a second member of a standoff in which the first member and the second member are coupled together according to one aspect of the present invention.

[015] Figure 4A is a side cross-sectional view illustrating the seal of the molded container in an unsealed configuration according to one aspect of the present invention.

[016] Figure 4B illustrates a seal of the molded container in a sealed configuration according to one aspect of the present invention.

[017] Figure 5 illustrates perspective view of molded container in which the upper lid portion is hingedly coupled to the lower tray portion according to one aspect of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[018] The present invention relates to a molded container 1 having an upper lid portion 20 and a lower tray portion 10 according to one aspect of the present invention. The upper tray portion 10 is configured to overlay and be securely coupled to lower tray portion 10 so as to substantially enclose objects between lower tray portion 10 and upper lid portion 20.

[019] According to one embodiment of the present invention, molded container 1 includes a plurality of standoffs 30a-f positioned between lower tray portion 10 and upper lid portion 20. Standoffs 30a-f maintain the desired displacement between a top surface of upper lid portion 20 and a bottom extremity of lower tray portion 10. Each standoff 30 includes a first member 32 and a second member 34 which provides a coupling adapted to minimize lateral movement of upper lid portion 20 relative to lower tray portion 10. The coupling of first and second members 32, 34 of each of standoffs 30 also prevents inadvertent separation and compression of upper lid portion 20 relative to lower tray portion 10.

[020] According to another embodiment of the present invention, molded container 1 further includes a multi-angle seal 40 adapted to facilitate the secure coupling of upper lid portion 20 and lower tray portion 10. Multi-angle seal 40 is formed from at least a portion of the perimeter of upper lid portion 20 and at least a portion of the perimeter of lower tray portion 10. At least one surface of multi-angle seal 40 provides a resistive force to prevent separation and provide a secure sealing surface when lower tray portion 10 and the upper lid portion 20 are forced together. At least one surface of the multi-angle seal provides a resistive force when lower tray portion 10 and upper lid portion 20 are forced in opposite directions. At least one

surface of multi-angle seal 40 provides resistive force to minimize lateral movement of lower tray 10 portion and upper lid portion 20 relative to one another.

[021] Figure 1 is a perspective view of molded container 1 according to one aspect of the present invention. In the illustrated embodiment, molded container 1 comprises an upper lid portion 20, a lower tray portion 10, standoffs 30a-f, and a multi-angle seal 40. Molded container 1 is configured to enclose food stuffs such as cookies, pastries, or the like. In the illustrated embodiment, molded container 1 is a thermoformed plastic container made from polyetheyleneteraphalate (PET). As will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, a variety of types and configurations of molded containers can be utilized without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention. For example, in one embodiment the molded container is adapted to enclose non-food objects or materials. In another embodiment, the molded container is formed by a non-thermoform process. In yet another embodiment, the container is made from a non-plastic polymer or non-polymer based material.

[022] In the illustrated embodiment, lower tray portion 10 is configured to at least partially enclose objects positioned therein. Lower tray portion 10 also provides a stable support surface for displaying molded container 1 and objects enclosed therein. Lower tray portion 10 includes a first enclosure row 12, a second enclosure row 14, a third enclosure row 16, and a fourth enclosure row 18. Each of the enclosure rows 12, 14, 16, 18, includes a plurality of ridges to maintain a desired orientation of the cookies and displacement between the cookies positioned in the enclosure rows. In the illustrated embodiment, the bottoms of the enclosure rows comprise a bottom extremity of the lower tray portion 10.

[023] Each enclosure row 12, 14, 16, 18 holds eight individual cookies. By utilizing four enclosure rows, a total of 32 cookies can be positioned in lower tray portion 10. As will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, a variety of types and configurations of lower tray portion 10 can be utilized without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention. For example, a different number of enclosure rows which are adapted to hold a different number of cookies can be utilized. For an example of an alternative configuration of lower tray portion 10, see the discussion with reference to Figure 5.

[024] Upper lid portion 20 is configured to overlay and be securely coupled to lower tray portion 10. Upper lid portion 20 overlays and is secured to lower tray portion 10 to substantially enclose the objects positioned between lower tray portion 10 and upper lid portion 20. By substantially enclosing the objects, lower tray portion 10 and upper lid portion 20 provide a protective covering to prevent inadvertent crushing, smashing, or other damage to the objects enclosed therein.

[025] In the illustrated embodiment, upper lid portion 20 includes a top surface 22 and side surfaces 24a-c. Top surface 22 provides a planar support on which additional molded containers can be stacked. Side surfaces 24a-c comprise lateral surfaces providing adequate displacement upper lid portion 10 and lower tray portion 20 to accommodate and substantially enclose objects positioned therebetween.

[026] A variety of types and configurations of upper lid portions can be utilized without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention. For example in one embodiment, the top surface of the upper lid portion has a curvilinear rather than a planar configuration. In an alternative embodiment, the upper lid portion has a shallow

configuration and is adapted to overlay a lower tray portion that substantially encloses the objects positioned therebetween.

[027] Standoffs 30a-f are positioned between lower tray portion 10 and upper lid portion 20. Standoffs 30a-f maintain a desired displacement between top surface 22 of upper lid portion 20 and a bottom extremity of lower tray portion 10. Standoffs 30a-f minimize lateral movement of upper lid portion 20 relative to lower tray portion 10 while preventing inadvertent separation and compression of upper lid portion 20 relative to lower tray portion 10.

[028] In the illustrated embodiment, standoffs 30a-f are positioned between enclosure rows 12, 14, 16, 18. Standoffs 30a and 30b are positioned between first enclosure row 12 and second enclosure row 14. Standoffs 30c and 30d are positioned between second enclosure row 14 and third enclosure row 16. Standoffs 30e and 30f are positioned between third enclosure row 16 and fourth enclosure row 18. A more complete discussion of standoffs 30 will be discussed with reference to Figure 3A and 3B.

[029] As will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, a variety of types and configurations of standoffs can be utilized without departing from the scope and the spirit of the present invention. For example, according to embodiment of the present invention, a single standoff is utilized between each enclosure row. In another embodiment, the standoffs comprise separate components that are not integrally coupled to the lower tray portion 10 and the upper lid portion 20.

[030] Multi-angle seal 40 secures upper lid portion 20 to lower tray portion 10. In the illustrated embodiment, multi-angle seal 40 is formed from at least a portion of the perimeter of the upper lid portion 20 and at least a portion of the perimeter of the lower

tray portion 10. Multi-angle seal 40 is configured to resist separation of upper lid portion 20 and lower tray portion 10 to prevent objects enclosed therein from falling out and to minimize passage of air which may lead to spoilage of products contained therein. A more complete discussion of multi-angle seal 40 will be included with reference to Figures 4A and 4B.

[031] Figure 2 is a perspective view of molded container 1 in which lower tray portion 10 and upper lid portion 20 are separated from one another. In the illustrated embodiment, lower tray portion 10 is a separate and distinct component from upper lid portion 20. Multi-angle seal 40 provides a mechanism for coupling lower tray portion 10 to upper lid portion 20. Standoffs 30a-f provide an additional mechanism for securing lower tray portion 10 to upper lid portion 20. The configuration of standoffs 30a-f and multi-angle seal 40 prevents inadvertent separation of lower tray portion 10 from upper lid portion. Additionally, standoffs 30a-f and multi-angle seal 40 allows a user to selectively separate and then reseal lower tray portion 10 to upper lid portion 20.

[032] In the illustrated embodiment, each of standoffs 30a-f include a first member 32 and a second member 34. First members 32a-f are integrally coupled to upper lid portion 20. Second members 34a-f are integrally coupled to lower tray portion 10. By being integrally coupled to lower tray portion 10 and upper lid portion 20, first members 32a-f and second members 34a-f can minimize lateral movement of the upper lid portion relative to lower tray portion while also preventing inadvertent separation and compression of the upper lid portion relative to the lower tray portion when a first member 32 is coupled to a second member 34.

[033] In the illustrated embodiment, multi-angle seal 40 comprises an upper sealing member 42 and a lower sealing member 44. Upper sealing member 42 is

formed from at least a portion of the perimeter of the upper lid portion 10. Lower sealing member 44 is formed from at least a portion of the perimeter of the lower tray portion 10. By being formed from a portion of the perimeter of the upper lid portion 20 and the lower tray portion 10, first upper sealing member 42 and lower sealing member 44 can cooperatively interact to secure coupling of the upper lid portion and the lower tray portion to minimize inadvertent separation and lateral movement of the lower tray portion relative to the upper tray portion 20.

[034] Figure 3A illustrates a first member 32 and a second member 34 of a standoff 30. In the illustrated embodiment, first member 32 is separated from second member 34 to more clearly depict illustrative structures that can be utilized with standoff 30. First member 32 comprises an annular ridge 320, an insertion neck 322, a structural support portion 324, and a coupling point 330. Annular ridge 320 is positioned at the bottom end of standoff 30 and is adapted to engage a portion of second member 34. Annular ridge 320 has a slightly larger diameter than insertion neck 322 to prevent separation of first member 32 from second member 34 when first member 32 and second member 34 are coupled together. Insertion neck 322 is positioned proximal to annular ridge 320. Insertion neck 322 is adapted to be inserted into a portion of second member 34 when first member 32 and second member 34 are coupled together.

[035] Structural support portion 324 is positioned above insertion neck 322. Structural support portion 324 provides the rigidity to withstand compressive and lateral forces that would otherwise result in movement of lower tray portion 10 relative to upper tray portion 20. In the illustrated embodiment, structural support portion 324 includes a plurality of lateral surfaces 326a-n. Lateral surfaces 326a-n provide planar surfaces that add a desired amount of rigidity to withstand lateral forces exerted on

structural support portion 324. In the illustrated embodiment, structural support portion 324 is hollow due to the thermoform process utilized to manufacture the molded container.

[036] As will appreciated by those skilled in the art, a variety of types and configurations of structural support portions can be utilized without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention. For example, in one embodiment, a different number of lateral surfaces are employed as a part of structural support portion. In an alternative embodiment, structural support portion 324 is columnar in shape. In yet another alternative embodiment, structural support portion 324 is solid rather than being hollow. Coupling point 330 is positioned above structural support portion 324. Coupling point 330 is the portion of first member 32 that is directly coupled to top surface 22 of upper lid portion 20.

[037] Second member 34 is positioned below first member 32. Second member 34 is adapted to be integrally coupled to lower tray portion 10 as illustrated in Figure 2. Second member 34 is adapted to cooperatively engage first member 32 to minimize movement of lower tray portion 10 relative to upper lid portion 20. In the illustrated embodiment, second member 34 comprises a securement void 340, a riser portion 342, and a coupling point 346. Securement void 340 accommodates all or a portion of annular ridge 320 and insertion neck 322 of first member 32. Securement void 340 is the point of coupling between first member 32 and second member 34.

[038] In the illustrated embodiment, the coupling of securement void 340, and annular ridge 320 provides a snap coupling preventing separation of first member 32 from second member 34 until a threshold amount of force is exerted to separate first member 32 apart from second member 34. The snap coupling can be adapted to resist

separation from forces normally experienced during handling of the container or from the weight of the objects container therein. Riser portion 342 provides a desired displacement between lower tray portion 10 and first member 32 to provide the desired coupling between first member 32 and second member 34. Riser portion 342 includes a plurality of lateral surfaces 344a-n. Lateral surfaces 344a-n provide a required amount of rigidity to withstand lateral forces exerted on riser portion 342. Coupling point 346 is the point at which second member 34 is coupled to lower tray portion 10.

[039] Figure 3B illustrates standoff 30 in which first member 32 is coupled to second member 34. In the illustrated embodiment, annular ridge 320 and insertion neck 322 are inserted into securement void 340. The coupling of annular ridge 320 and insertion neck 322 into securement void 340 prevents inadvertent separation of first member 32 from second member 34. By preventing inadvertent separation of first member 32 and second member 34 inadvertent separation of lower tray portion 10 from upper lid portion 20 is prevented.

[040] Structural support portion 324 of first member 32 and riser portion 342 of second member 34 provides sufficient rigidity to overcome compressive and/or lateral forces that may result in movement of lower tray portion relative to upper lid portion 20. As will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, a variety of types and configurations of standoffs can be utilized without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention. For example in one embodiment, a friction coupling that does not utilize a snap type coupling is utilized. In an alternative embodiment, a single standoff member is adapted to engage either upper lid portion 20 or lower tray portion 10. In yet another alternative embodiment, the first member is coupled to the lower tray portion 10 and the second member is coupled to the upper lid portion 20.

[041] Figure 4A is a side view of multi-angle seal 40 according to one aspect of the present invention. In the illustrated embodiment, multi-angle seal 40 comprises an upper sealing member 42 and a lower sealing member 44. Multi-angle seal facilitates secure coupling of upper lid portion 20 and lower tray portion 10. In the illustrated embodiment, upper sealing member 42 comprises an edge surface 420, a first transverse compression sealing surface 422, a first perpendicular surface 424, a transverse tension sealing surface 426, a second perpendicular surface 428, a second transverse compression sealing surface 430, a top surface 432, and a third transverse compression sealing surface 434.

[042] In the illustrated embodiment, edge surface 420 comprises the outside edge of the upper sealing member 42. Additionally, edge surface 420 is formed from the edge of the material from which upper lid portion 20 and upper sealing member 42 is formed. First transverse compression sealing surface 422 provides resistive force to prevent separation and provide a secure sealing when lower tray portion and the upper lid portion are forced together. First transverse compression sealing surface 422 also minimizes lateral movement of the lower tray portion to the upper lid portion relative to one another.

[043] First perpendicular surface 424 prevents lateral movement of lower tray portion and upper lid portion relative to one another in a first direction. Transverse tension sealing surface 426 provides a resistive force when the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion are pulled in opposite directions. Additionally transverse tension sealing surface 426 minimizes lateral movement of lower tray portion and upper lid portion relative to one another. Second perpendicular surface 428 provides a resistive

force to minimize lateral movement of the lower tray portion relative to the upper lid portion.

[044] Second transverse compression sealing surface 430 provides a resistive force when the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion are forced together. Additionally, second transverse compression sealing surface 430 minimizes lateral movement of lower tray portion of upper lid portion relative to one another. Top surface 432 provides a resistive force when the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion are pushed together. Third transverse compression sealing surface 434 provides a resistive force when the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion are forced together. Additionally, third transverse compression sealing surface 434 minimizes lateral movement of lower tray portion and the upper lid portion relative to one another. In the illustrated embodiment, when lateral forces are exerted on the upper lid portion and/or the lower tray portion third transverse compression sealing surface 434 provides a resistive force in the direction opposite of first transverse compression sealing surface 422 and second transverse compression sealing surface 430.

[045] In the illustrated embodiment, lower sealing member 44 comprises an edge surface 440, a first transverse compression sealing surface 442, a first perpendicular surface 444, a transverse tension sealing surface 446, a second perpendicular surface 448, a second transverse compression sealing surface 450, a top surface 452, and a third transverse compression sealing surface 454. In the illustrated embodiment, edge surface 420 comprises the outside edge of the lower sealing member 44. Additionally, edge surface 440 is formed from the edge of the material from which lower tray portion 10 and lower sealing member 44 is formed. First transverse compression sealing surface 442 provides resistive force to prevent separation and provide a secure sealing

when lower tray portion and the upper lid portion are forced together. First transverse compression sealing surface 442 also minimizes lateral movement of the lower tray portion to the upper lid portion relative to one another.

[046] First perpendicular surface 444 prevents lateral movement of lower tray portion and upper lid portion relative to one another in a first direction. Transverse tension sealing surface 446 provides a resistive force when the lower tray portion and the upper lid portions are pulled in opposite directions. Additionally transverse tension sealing surface 446 minimizes lateral movement of lower tray portion and upper lid portion relative to one another. Second perpendicular surface 448 provides a resistive force to minimize lateral movement of the lower tray portion relative to the upper lid portion.

[047] Second transverse compression sealing surface 450 provides a resistive force when the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion are forced together. Additionally, second transverse compression sealing surface 450 minimizes lateral movement of lower tray portion of upper lid portion relative to one another. Top surface 452 provides a resistive force when the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion are pushed together. Third transverse compression sealing surface 454 provides a resistive force when the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion are forced together. Additionally, third transverse compression sealing surface 454 minimizes lateral movement of lower tray portion and the upper lid portion relative to one another. In the illustrated embodiment, when lateral forces are exerted on the upper lid portion and/or the lower tray portion third transverse compression sealing surface 454 provides a resistive force in the direction opposite of first transverse compression sealing surface 442 and second transverse compression sealing surface 450.

[048] Upper sealing member 42 and lower sealing member 44 are configured to cooperatively interact to facilitate the secure coupling of upper lid portion and lower tray portion. The number and angles of surfaces of the multi-angle seal not only facilitates a secured coupling so as to prevent inadvertent separation and spillage of the contents of the molded container 1, but also provides an air tight seal to minimize spoilage of food or other materials enclosed in molded container 1. In the illustrated embodiment, edge surface 420 is adapted to engage edge surface 440. First transverse compression sealing surface 422 is adapted to engage first transverse compression sealing surface 442. First perpendicular surface 424 is adapted to engage first perpendicular surface 444. First transverse tension sealing surface 426 is adapted to engage transverse tension sealing surface 446. Second perpendicular surface 428 is adapted to engage second perpendicular surface 448. Top surface 432 is adapted to engage top surface 452. Third transverse compression sealing surface 434 is adapted to engage third transverse compression sealing surface 454.

[049] As will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, a variety of types and configurations multi-angle seal 40 can be utilized without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention. For example, a variety of numbers and slopes of angles can be utilized without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention In one embodiment, the multi-angle seal includes at least one angle that provides a resistive force to prevent separation and provide a secure sealing surface when the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion are forced together, at least one angle of the multi-angle seal provides a resistive force when the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion are forced in opposite directions, and at least one angle provides resistive force

to minimize lateral movement of the lower tray portion and the upper lid portion relative to one another.

[050] Figure 4B illustrates multi-angle seal 40 in which upper sealing member 42 is coupled to lower sealing member 44. In the illustrated embodiment, edge surface 420 is engaged with edge surface 440. First transverse compression sealing surface 422 is engaged with first transverse compression sealing surface 442. First perpendicular surface 424 is engaged with first perpendicular surface 444. Transverse tension sealing surface 426 is engaged with transverse tension sealing surface 446. Second perpendicular surface 428 is engaged with second perpendicular surface 448. Second transverse compression sealing surface 430 is engaged with second transverse compression sealing surface 450. Top surface 432 is engaged with top surface 452, third transverse compression sealing surface 434 is coupled to third transverse compression sealing surface 454.

[051] The coupling of surfaces of upper sealing member 42 and lower sealing member 44 prevents inadvertent separation and lateral movement of lower tray portion 10 relative to upper lid portion 20. When upper lid portion 20 is forced in a first lateral direction 52 while lower tray portion 10 remains stationary, third transverse compression sealing surface 434 provides a resistive force to third transverse compression sealing surface 454 to prevent lateral movement of upper lid portion 20 relative to lower tray portion 10. When upper lid portion 20 is forced in a second lateral direction 54, while lower tray portion 10 remains stationary, first transverse compression sealing surface 442, first perpendicular surface 444, transverse tension sealing surface 446, second perpendicular surface 448, and second transverse compression sealing surface 450 all provide resistive force to corresponding surfaces

422-432 to prevent lateral movement of upper lid portion 10 relative to lower tray portion 20.

[052] When a compressive force is exerted on upper lid portion 20, such that upper lid portion is forced in a downward direction while lower tray portion remains stationary, surfaces 442, 426, 450, and 452 all provides resistance to surfaces 442, 446, 430, and 432 to prevent compression of upper lid portion 20 relative to lower tray portion 10. When upper lid portion is pulled upwards while lower tray portion 10 remains stationary, transverse tension sealing surface 446 provides resistive force to transverse tension sealing surface 426 to prevent inadvertent separation of the upper lid portion 20 from the lower tray portion 10.

[053] Lateral movement of upper lid portion 20 relative to lower tray portion 10 is additionally prevented due to the configuration of multi-angle seal 40. Multi-angle seal 40 is positioned around at least a portion of the perimeter of the upper lid portion 20 and the lower tray portion 10. While the majority of the sealing surfaces of the multi-angle seal are positioned on one side of multi-angle seal 40, multi-angle seal 40 is present on alternative sides of molded container 1. Additionally, the sides of multi-angle seal 40 having the majority of sealing surfaces are faced away from each other. Thus, when lateral force is exerted in one lateral direction the portion of multi-angle seal positioned on one side of the molded container will provide the majority of resistive force. When a lateral force is exerted in a second lateral direction, the portion of multi-angel seal positioned on the other side of the molded container will provide the majority of resistance to lateral movement.

[054] With reference now to Figure 5 there is shown a molded container 60 according to another embodiment of the present invention. In the illustrated

embodiment, molded container 60 includes a first row 62, a second row 64 and a third row 66. First row 62, second row 64, and third row 66, are configured to hold a number of cookies positioned therein. Where each of rows 62, 64, and 66 are configured to accommodate eight cookies, a total of 24 cookies can be contained in molded container 60. In the illustrated embodiment, four standoffs 70a-d are utilized. Standoffs 70a and 70b are positioned between first row 62 and second row 64. Standoffs 70c and 70d are positioned between second row 64 and third row 66.

[055] In the illustrated embodiment, molded container 60 includes a hinge 80. Hinge 80 couples the upper lid portion to the lower tray portion of molded container 60. As will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, a variety of types and configurations of molded containers can be utilized without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention. For example in one embodiment, molded container 60 includes a plurality of circular enclosures for holding muffins, cinnamon rolls, or the like. In an alternative embodiment, the lower tray portion comprises a planar surface for accommodating any type or configuration of food stuff, object, material, or the like.

[056] The present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from its spirit or essential characteristics. The described embodiments are to be considered in all respects only as illustrative and not restrictive. The scope of the invention is, therefore, indicated by the appended claims rather than by the foregoing description. All changes which come within the meaning and range of equivalency of the claims are to be embraced within their scope.